

Retreat Plantation, Greenhouse and Slave Hospital
St. Simons Island
Georgia

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey

SLAVE HOSPITAL AND GREENHOUSE
Retreat Plantation
St. Simons Island, Glynn County
Georgia

Owner: Sea Island Company.

Date of Erection: Slave Hospital between 1800 and 1810¹; green-
house, 1802².

Architect and Builder: No record.

Present Condition: Ruins.

Number of Stories: Two storey and attic slave hospital.

Materials of Construction: Tabby.

Other Existing Records: See text; see illustration of the green-
house in Garden History of Georgia, page 38.

Additional Data: See following pages.

¹ Data given by P. Thornton Marye, District Officer, HABS.

² Garden History of Georgia, page 38.

SLAVE HOSPITAL AND GREENHOUSE
Retreat Plantation, St. Simon's Island
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HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL NOTES:

In 1799 Retreat Plantation was the home of Major and Mrs. William Page, originally of South Carolina. The property was formerly known as "Orange Grove" and belonged to James Spalding.¹ Both the slave hospital and the greenhouse were erected in the early nineteenth century .

The greenhouse: "In 1799 Mrs. Page began the planting of her garden which lay between the rear of the house and the slave hospital..... Mrs. Page built the large tabby hot-house which was later enlarged by her daughter [Mrs. King] . It seems to have been the only one on the Island. There is no record of what it contained".¹ Another source ² states that "the hot-house, seemingly the only one on the island, was built of tabby, and measured 18 by 15 feet. It was afterward enlarged by Mrs. Page's daughter, Mrs. King."

The hospital: "Mrs. King's care of the negroes of Retreat Plantation was typical of the manner in which the best plantations of the South looked after the welfare of their slaves. A tabby hospital, two and one half stories high and containing ten rooms, was equipped to care for the sick negroes. The ruins are still standing --mute evidence of the care which plantation owners gave the negroes who were their property."³

¹ Garden History of Georgia, page 37. 127.

² Gardens of Colony and State, vol.2, pages 305,306.

³ Cate, M.D., Our Today's and Yesterdays, page 127.

⁴ by P. M. , former District 127.

Slave Hospital and Greenhouse, continued.

Records belonging to the descendants of Major Page state that two well-trained slave women were in constant attendance under the direction of Mrs. Page, and later of her daughter, Mrs. Thomas Butler King.⁴

From the photographs the hospital was evidently a large two storey rectangular tabby building, with at least one interior brick chimney.

⁴ Data given by P. Thornton Marye, former District Officer, HABS.

by Henry Chandler Forman
1936

(Original sheet in field notebook).